

# ANARCHY



20p



# ANARCHY 25

Anarchy, 29 Grosvenor Avenue, London N5, England. 01-359 4794 before 7pm.

1. PICKET - LINE POLITICS .  
The changing attitudes of the firemen.
2. THE FIREMEN'S STRIKE AND THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT.  
What happened and what didn't & what was learned.
6. THE ANTI - STATE / ANTI - NUCLEAR MOVEMENT.  
After we've dismantled the State we will inherit nuclear waste, lethal for 25,000 years.
8. ANARCHY IN THE U.K. - O.K.?  
How anarchists organise and develop their ideas, concentrating on the London scene.
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A short look at some recent news.
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A free town of 1,000 people, in the centre of Copenhagen threatened with eviction.
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Woof.
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Why I don't read Anarchy anymore, Work & Non-Work, Ireland, the E.G.A.
23. REVIEWS.  
Rough Theatre, Cienfuegos Anarchist Review.
24. THE HARE AND THE TORTOISE.  
The human race.



*Cover design by Cliff Horper.*

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Remember Anarchy is only as good as the material and feedback we receive.

## Who said this?

1. "A general prohibition of child labour is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry, and hence an empty pious wish."
2. "The work-ethic holds that labour is good in itself, that a man or a woman becomes a better person by the act of working. The work-ethic of the American people is alive and well on this, Labour day, 1971."

3. "Labour, obligatory for the whole country, compulsory for every worker, is the basis of Socialism."
4. "Work is freedom."
5. "Six days shalt thou labour."
6. "Hi. ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go'."

Answers, - BACK PAGE.



# PICKET-LINE POLITICS

The Firemen's strike showed in many ways the contradictions existing amongst workers in the Trade Union Movement today. For me it exemplified some of the most exciting and depressing possibilities for a libertarian workers' movement in this country.

Despite working in the same building as a branch of the Fire Prevention Service for almost a year, my first real contact with local firemen was when I interviewed them for a community paper a few days before the beginning of the strike.

Like most London Firemen, they had voted against strike action. They felt there should have been a ballot rather than a delegate conf., and anyway due to a London allowance, were rather better off than their colleagues in other parts of the country.

In some ways the interview was disappointing - there was very little criticism of their own Union bureaucracy, and their insistence on comparing themselves with the police led to an angry debate on Grunwicks. But what did come across, even at that early stage, was the frustration with endless enquiries and the fact that they expected the strike to be solid.

## The strike

From the first day of the strike, when the picket-line went up outside our office, a few of us began to spend our lunch hours sitting round the brazier chatting with the strikers. Looking back it seems difficult to imagine how a small union, with no strike fund and little industrial muscle, could have hoped to take on the Govt. over the 10% and win. But at the time, morale amongst both the strikers and their supporters was high. Three things particularly struck me as exciting:

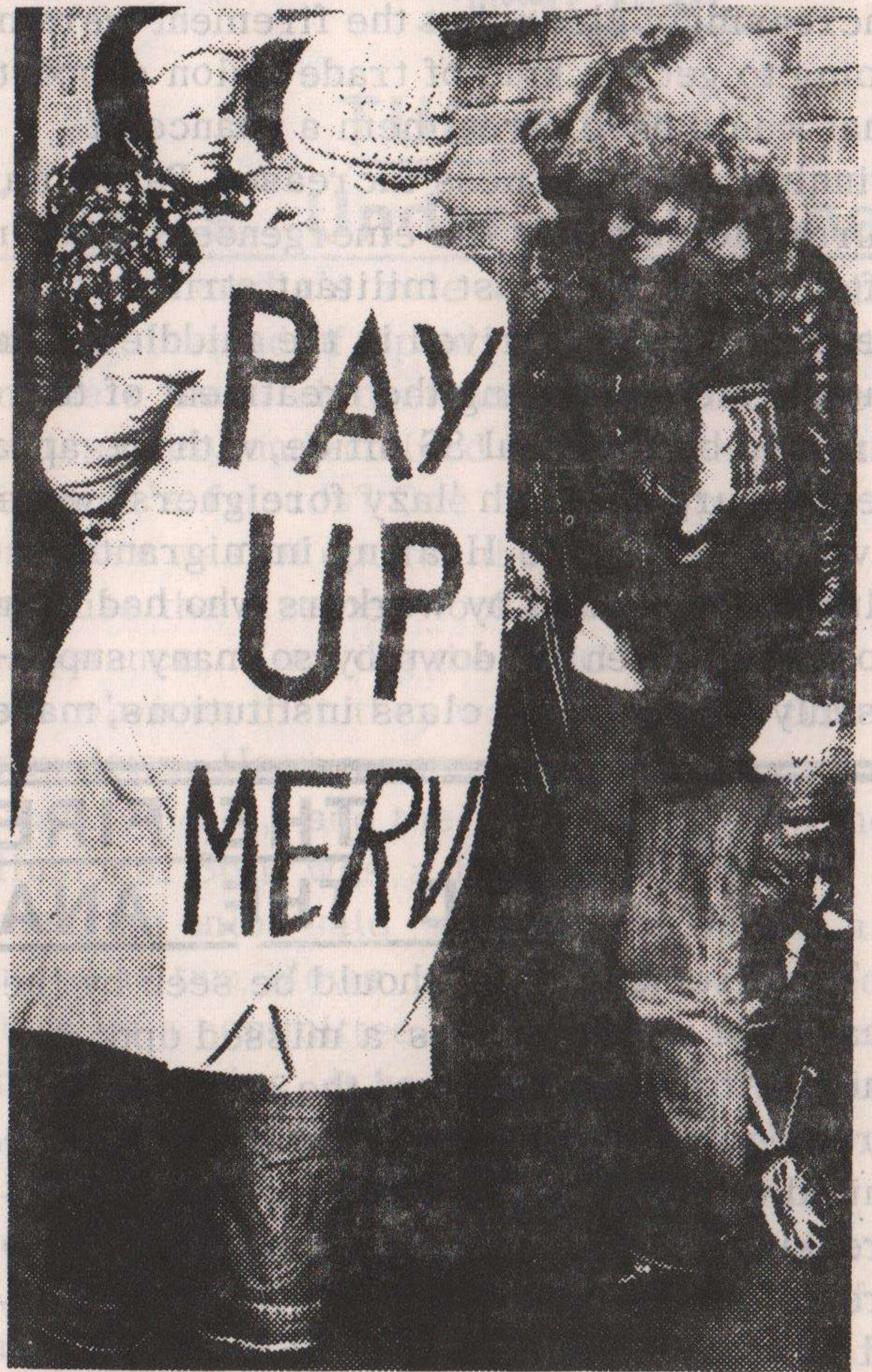
- \*the tremendous sense of co-operation and solidarity among themselves, presumably born of the long hours spent talking in the station and the way in which they have learned to trust each other by facing danger together.

- \*the individuality and ingenuity of publicity - each station having different slogans, petitions, leaflets etc., and the regularity with which new ones appeared. The Fire Brigades Union did virtually nothing in this respect.

- \*the support from the public, with all kinds of people coming forward to sign petitions, offer money, food, wood etc.

Initially all the firemen's anger was directed at NAFO - the officers' Union - with whose support they felt, possibly correctly, that the strike could have been brought to a successful end more quickly. They were particularly bitter that officers had agreed not to cross picket lines, which they thought was a cop-out as they were in effect getting paid to do nowt.

After a few days though, their anger spread - to the press, as they realised how it distorted the reality, to the TUC, and to the Social Security system. Their own Union also came in for a fair amount of hammering. I was at the station one day when the daily strike bulletin arrived.\* For a start it was a day



*No mistaking the message for the Home Secretary from wives in Romford.*

old. Two thirds of it was taken up with a justification of the TUC's first refusal to back the strike. The Union leadership was arguing that the firemen were not to take this personally - the TUC wasn't against their claim, just against them threatening the 10% ! The remaining third was a curt warning about drunkenness on the picket line - as if anyone

- \*This was usually dumped by a Union official who took their collected money and left.



could afford it. The SWP's Rank & File Fireman was much better - filled with news and encouragement despite the stock leftist phrases.

## The going gets harder

I don't know whether this was general, but in our local station the whole quality of the strike changed when the picketing was cut down to save fares. Each group of 4 or 5 was on duty only once every 8 days, with no contact between times. For instance, many firemen never heard about the local march until it was over - a classic example of how little the FBU did to help the strike.

As the strike wore on, and it became increasingly clear that the firemen were not going to get the kind of trade-union support that would have given them a chance of winning, the bitterness increased. Particularly hurtful for me was the emergence of racism, often among the most militant strikers. Several times I arrived in the middle of the latest tale comparing the treatment of the firemen by the local SS office, with the apparent luxury in which 'lazy foreigners' were living off the state. Hearing immigrants ultimately blamed by workers who had been so clearly let down by so many supposedly pro-working class institutions, made

me realise how enormous the task of combatting racist attitudes really is.

Whether we have seen the end of industrial action in the fire service is hard to say. Some firemen think there will be trouble between FBU and NAFO members, especially when the troops moved out; and that either a settlement in excess of the 10% - e.g. for the powerworkers - or a conservative victory in the next Election, will precipitate another strike. Neither is it clear whether the firemen involved in the strike, have become more, or less militant as a result of their action. But they have certainly learned a lot about the Labour Govt., their Union, the TUC and the national media.

For the few anarchists actively involved in solidarity work with the strikers, it is difficult to see what more material support we could have given. The posters and stickers produced by the Anarchy group and others were certainly much appreciated. Perhaps we could have set up a support group earlier in the strike, and tried to involve a wide selection of workers, much in the way that some of the Grunwicks support committees did. Or perhaps we should have spent more time simply talking to firemen on the picket line.

Babs.

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## THE FIREMEN'S STRIKE AND THE ANARCHIST MOVEMENT

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The firemen's strike should be seen by the anarchist movement as a missed opportunity. At the beginning of the strike the firemen were very strong, in that they were united (only very few officers were strike-breaking, despite the impressions being created by the media), they were determined and they were confident. They also possessed huge public support, which is unusual these days, and this support seemed so strong that even the press and television were not attacking the firemen for their action. There were indeed some articles printed supporting the firemen in quite strong terms.

This situation presented us, I believe, with a unique opportunity. We could be putting out propaganda on an issue on which most people already agreed with us, and attacking a government on an issue where it did not have any significant support.

The consequences of the government losing the strike were enormous, it would have encouraged, almost forced, all other public sector unions to go for similar rises over 10%, and in the end might have brought the government down.

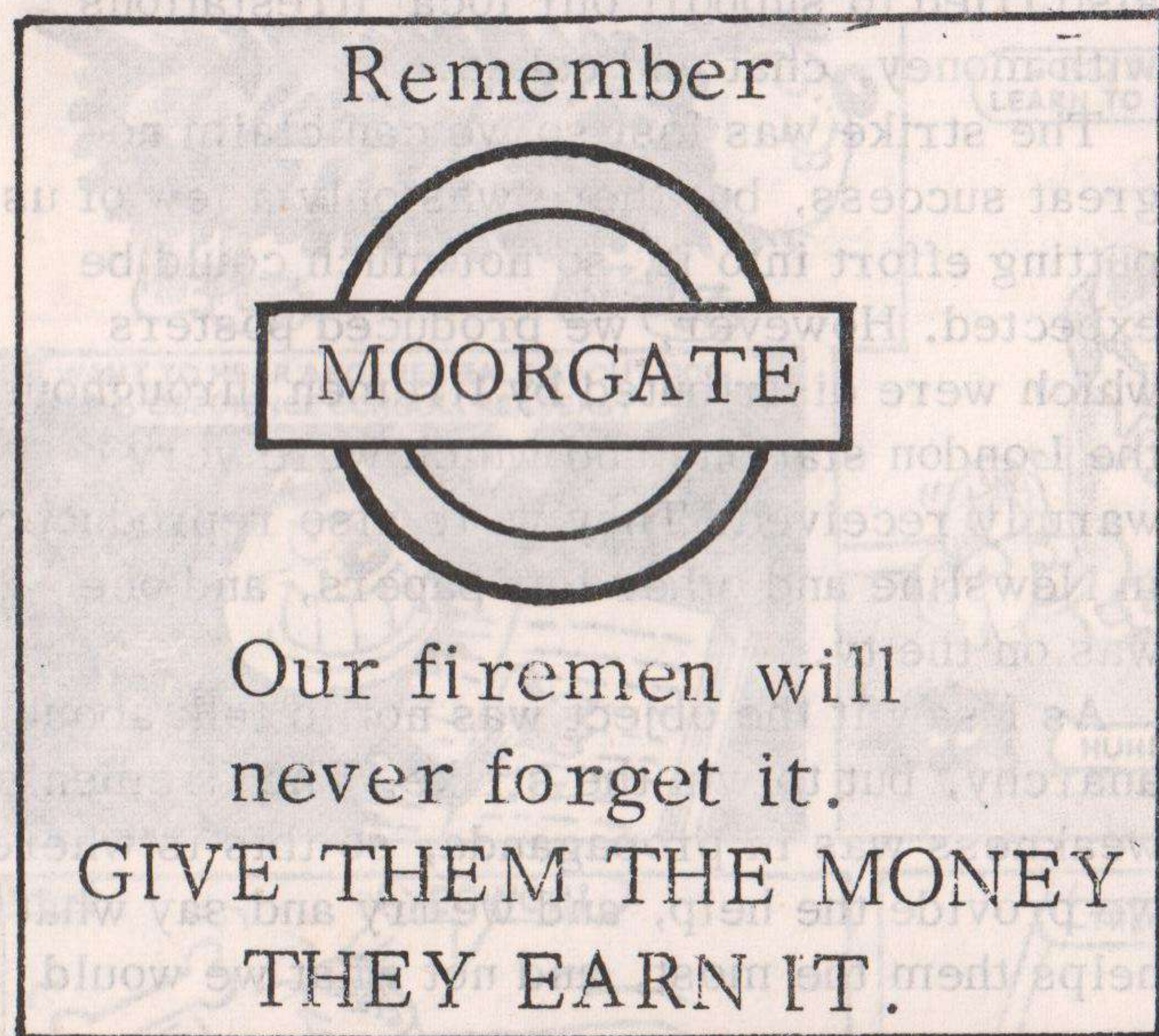
The economic theory behind the strike was simple. Without the fire brigade there would be mounting fire losses, borne by the insurance companies who would start mounting pressure on the government, as would more and more firms worried about their chances of a small fire completely gutting their premises causing a dislocation of business against which they are not insured. Against this the firemen's union does not have a strike fund, so the possibility of starving the men back to work was a real one.

But as is so often the case the economic base of the strike was not the determining



factor. The government victory was a propaganda one. I would almost say a brilliant one. Looking back through the press reports you will notice how little attention was paid after the first week to the rights and wrongs of the strike. This I am sure was due to the governments feeling that the firemen's case was an unusually strong one, and the more it was talked about even in the biased media, the more people would support the strikers. So what did the media talk about? Well firstly they talked about the effects of the strike. They were stating time and time again, the strike was having very little effect. If you tried to check this information you would have found that officially there were no figures available. The whole thing was very convenient. With no information being released ( except that the number of fires was normal ) it is difficult to challenge what they were saying and impossible to accuse them of deliberately lying, but with them repeating this day after day the assumption grows that it must be true and if it is true then the firemen might lose.

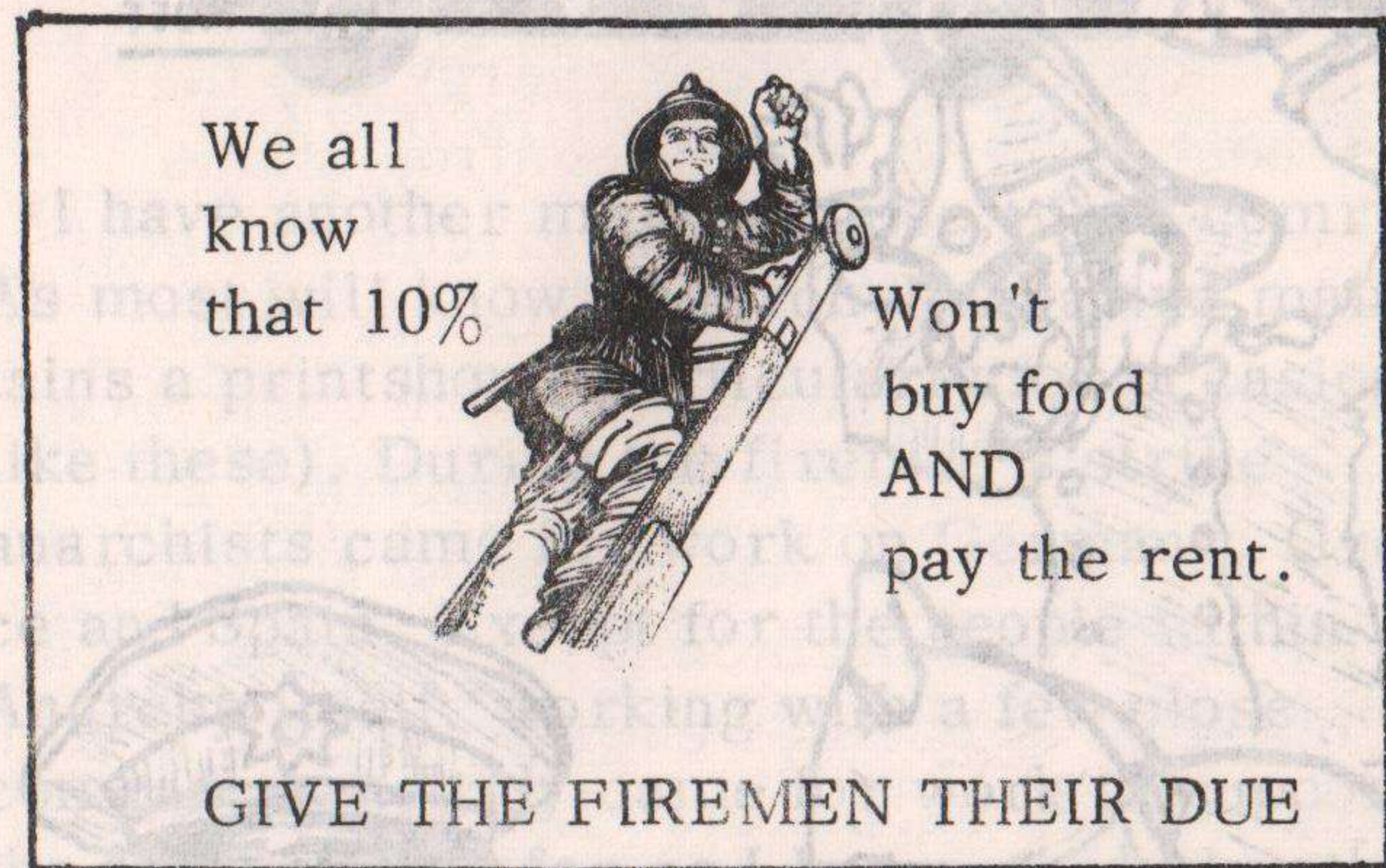
Then from half way through the first month the winning propaganda line was



- One of our stickers

produced (I think first in the Financial Times, but I could easily be wrong). Like many of the best in propaganda it was a little thing that most people will have ignored, consciously that is. But very soon it was coming into more and more people's conversation. The winning line? "The firemen are going to lose" or "When they have lost". As time went on almost every report

on the strike contained this gem. There was never any explanation as to why they might lose or argument over it, just the bold assertion that they were, repeated over and over and over.



- Another sticker.

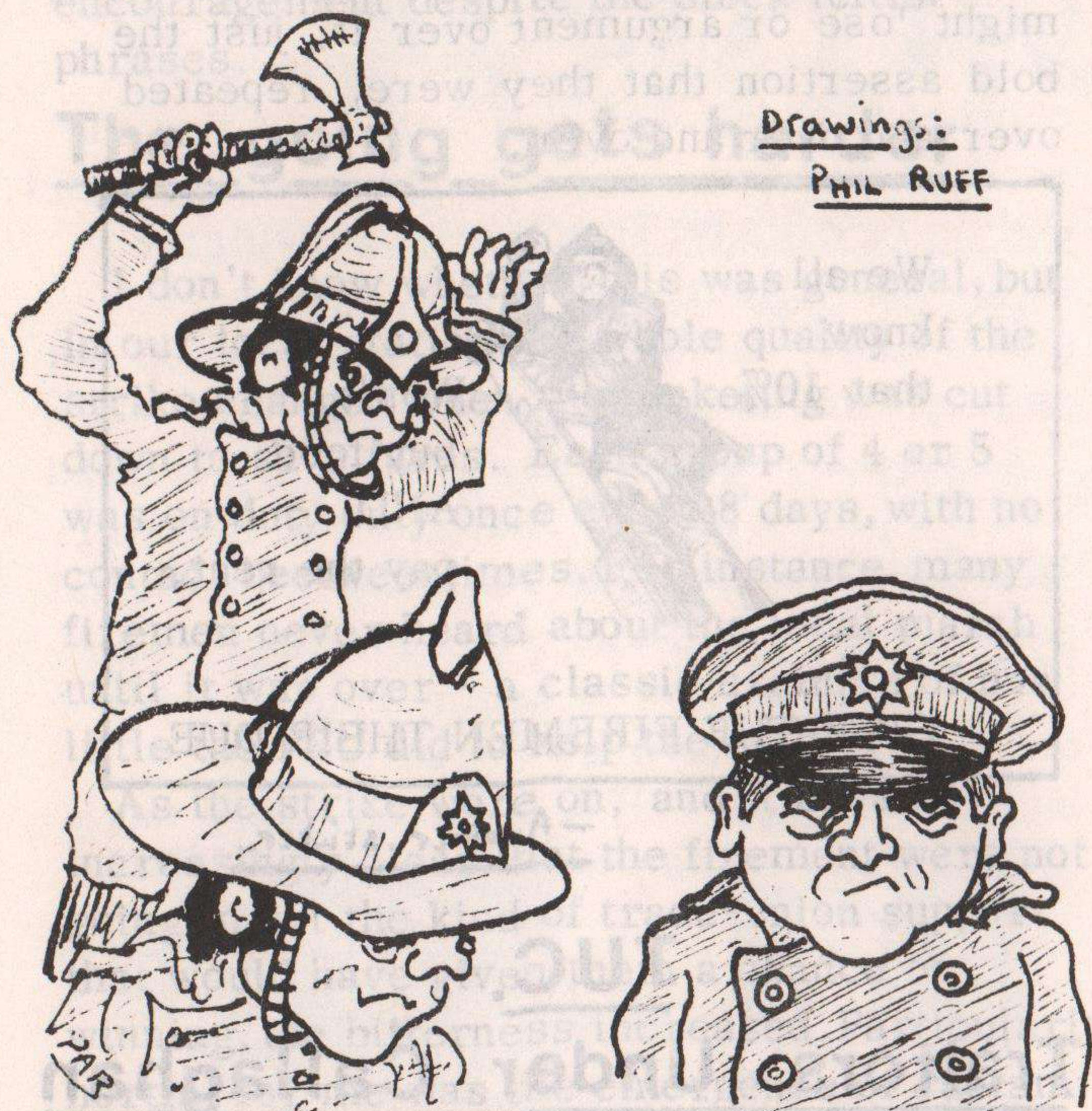
## TUC. Traitors Under Callaghan

So the media's role was an unusual one, in that instead of openly opposing the strike, in their usual sledgehammer fashion, they just subtly undermined it. But what of the firemen's friends? One of their greatest enemies was of course the TUC, and just because the firemen looked to them for assistance. Knowing the TUC's record it was obvious that they would turn the firemen down. However most firemen were not aware of this, and their union fostered their illusions. So it was a body blow to them when the union said 'no'. Worse, it was arranged as two blows - first they are turned down by a committee, but there is hope yet, the union cries, it has to go to the full council, so a couple of weeks later the full council meets, and delivers the blow again by repeating the answer - no support.

Now we knew this would happen. Some of us tried to warn the firemen, but got a very cold reception. There seemed nothing we could do in advance to soften the blow. But we knew this was coming so we could have been ready. We could have launched a strong attack on the TUC within one hour of their decision being known; because we could have prepared it all in advance. Propaganda coups like this are what makes the difference between a movement pissing into the wind and one which is seriously threatening the government. We repeatedly run down the TUC, but when nobody is interested, when suddenly 40,000



people are very interested we are just pausing for breath, and a chance is missed.



Drawings:  
Phil Ruff

## Grass roots unionists

Thousands of union branches gave the firemen their support and money. This support was the only true support the firemen got from other unions. Here again an opportunity was missed, although not really by us, for our influence is small at union branches. The problem was just one of making this support grow each week and become stronger. It did not, it slowly died out. Why? Because nothing was done to make it go otherwise. There seem to be two factors. The firemen did little to encourage them. A number of union branches approached their local firemen to come and speak at a branch meeting. The firemen said they would and then never turned up. The second factor is that, as I see it, the lefties at any local branch are always bringing up 'political' issues, and when an important political issue comes up most branch members don't want to know, the lefties have turned them off already.

The union officials of all these other unions seemed to be on a go-slow throughout the strike. A go-slow so that they would not be calling their members out at the same time as the firemen were out. Such a move as that might well win two strikes at once, but would almost certainly lose a union boss his knighthood.

## The left

Of course the good old left supported the strike, we all saw their posters - support the firemen, read the daily worker. They all seemed to see the strike as another membership drive, handing out leaflets saying 'if you want to win the strike you should join the SWP and build the revolutionary party'. We did not see the revolutionary party very much in action, however, and the ones I met down the fire stations sickened me, and I think most firemen too, by their attempted party building. This was also shown by the number of posters I saw at fire stations supporting the firemen, which had either the top or bottom cut off, where it had said in large red letters 'Support your Trotskyist Hacks' - or words to that effect.

This parasitical behaviour of the left was probably as bad for the firemen as was the TUC's behaviour.

## So what did YOU do in the strike daddy ?

From the beginning we tried to produce posters, stickers, leaflets, supporting the firemen and attacking the government. We also tried to support our local firestations with money, chat and cakes.

The strike was lost so we can claim no great success, but there was only a few of us putting effort into it, so not much could be expected. However, we produced posters which were distributed by firemen throughout the London stations and which were very warmly received. They were also reproduced in Newline and other left papers, and one was on the tv.

As I saw it the object was not to talk about anarchy, but to win the strike. The firemen's weakness was in propaganda, so this is where we provide the help, and we try and say what helps them the most, and not what we would

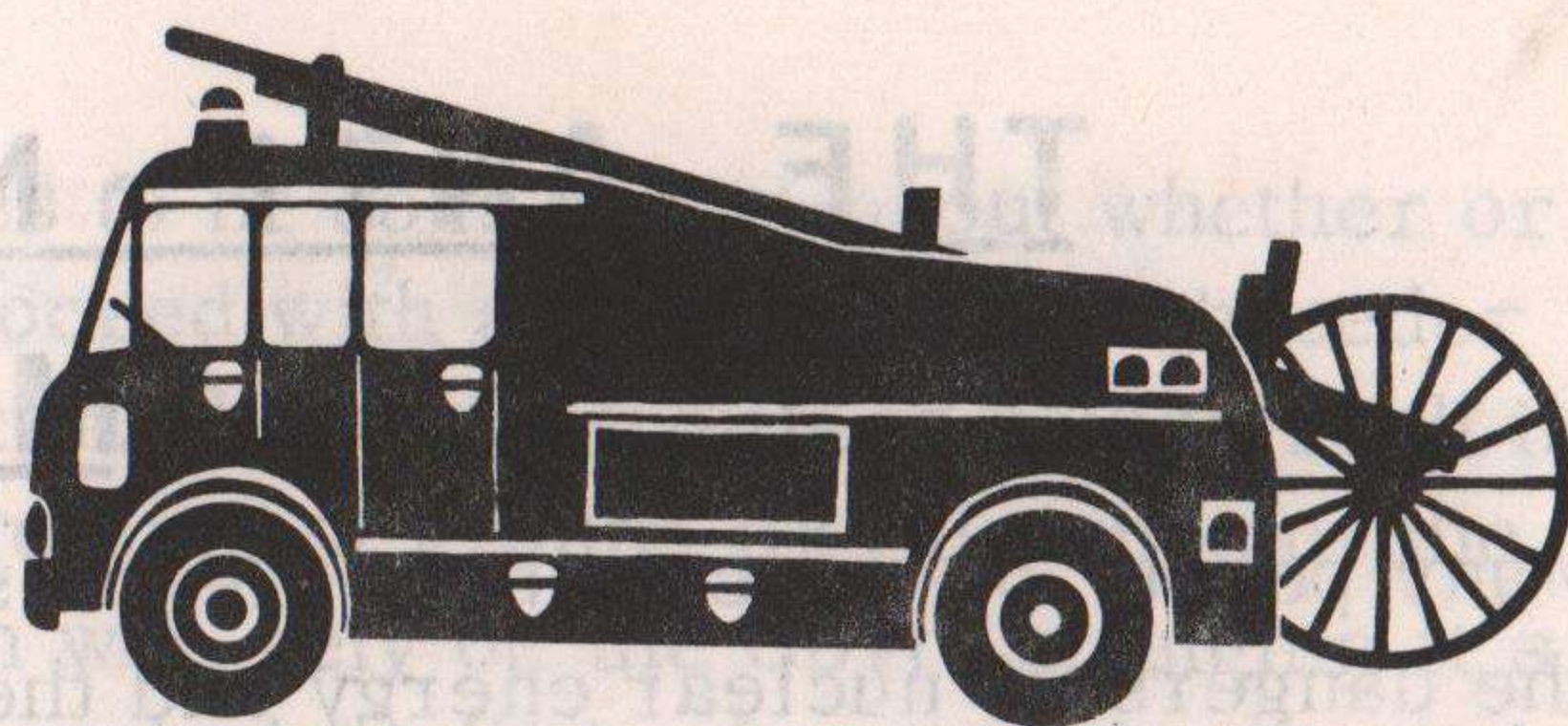




most like to say. We got out one poster which had been suggested by two of our local firemen. But although I think we were working on the right lines, it was a case of far too little, too late.

I must say that I was deeply disappointed in the attitude I met amongst most of the anarchist movement. If we are going to have a movement without any central structure, as is right, then we must be self-mobilising. That is, each and every anarchist must move themselves at a time of crises, so it does not take six months for the movement as a whole to realise that the wind has changed.

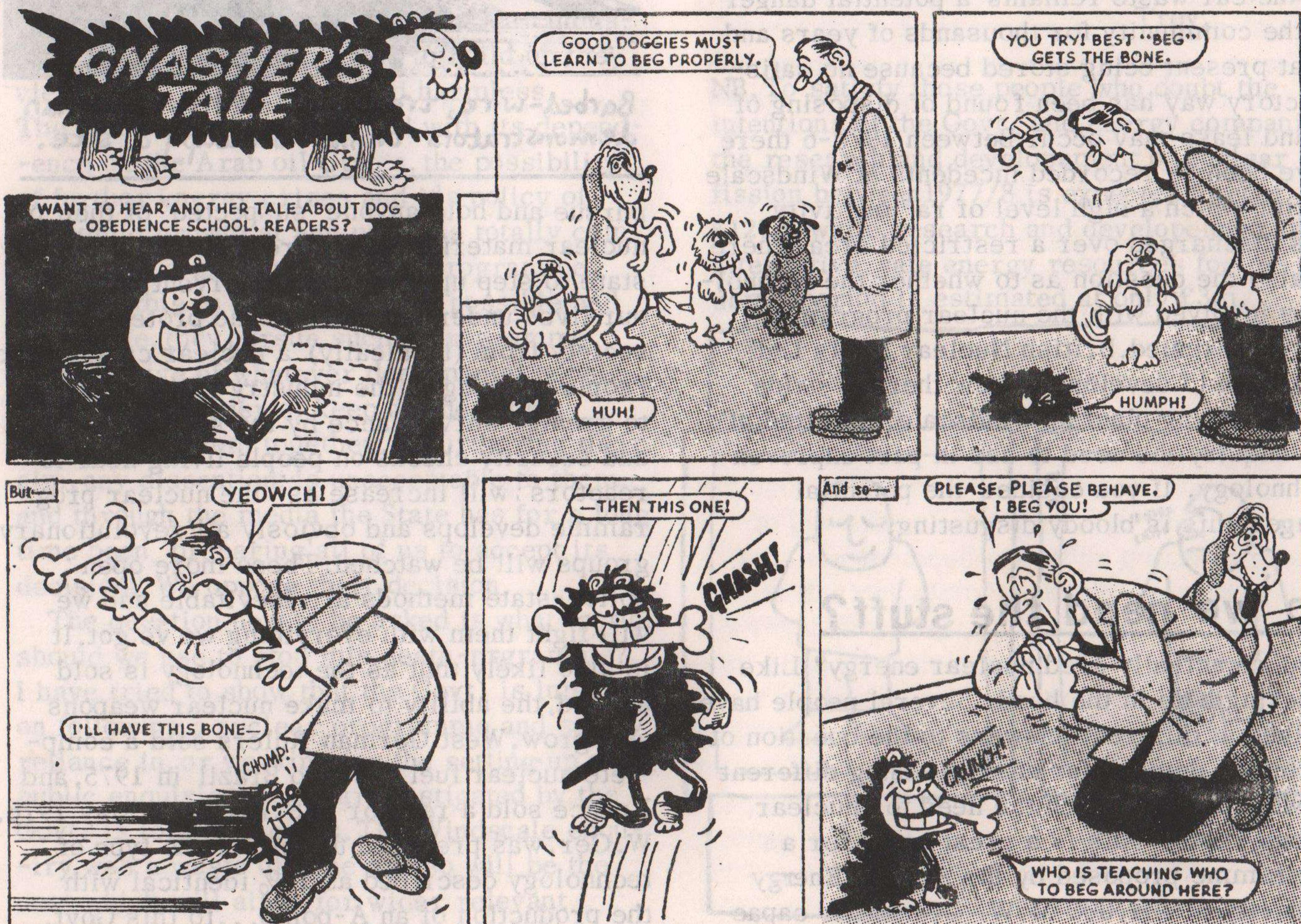
Part of the difficulty is perhaps that we have become too inward looking and study our navels too much, but maybe we are losing our flexibility which used to be one of our major strengths. For instance I have long been an advocate of working in local areas on local issues, rather than getting involved in national or international campaigns. To suddenly change from a purely local issue to devoting as much time as possible to a national strike might seem to some a bit of a turn around, but instinct said it was right, so that is what I did. Maybe we should give our brains a rest occasionally and give our hearts a bit more of a chance.



I have another major grouse, dear comrades. As most will know, Anarchy magazine maintains a printshop (particularly for occasions like these). During the firemen's strike anarchists came for work on Germany, Greece and Spain. Except for the people within Anarchy itself, working with a few close comrades, nobody came for work to support the firemen. As far as I know, the only other thing produced during the strike by anarchists in London, were some stickers (good ones of course) printed by one of the AWA factions.

As an almost lifelong critic of 'Freedom' newspaper, honour forces me to mention that they are to date the only anarchist paper to reach me with articles on the strike. Of course, as a 'Freedom' hater I do not give them credit for this, I just mark the rest of the movement down a double dose for not even being able to match 'Freedom'!

Chris Broad.





# THE ANTI-NUCLEAR/ANTI-STATE MOVEMENT

Many people on the continent are conscious of the dangers of nuclear energy and there have been several violent confrontations between them and the State forces who obviously protect the interests of the multinational energy companies. Such confrontations have occurred at Wyl, Brokdorf and Malville. We think that it's about time that people in Britain become directly involved in the question of nuclear energy because it will affect not only us, but also future generations.

The case against nuclear power is extensive; it is known that the levels of radiation are increasing in the environment, and the effects of too high a level are cancer or genetic malformations, transmitted from parents to their children. Those most affected are the workers in the Industry but there is no agreement about the safe level of exposure for these people and it's been repeatedly lowered, which is great news for those who've been working for years and had thought they were protected.

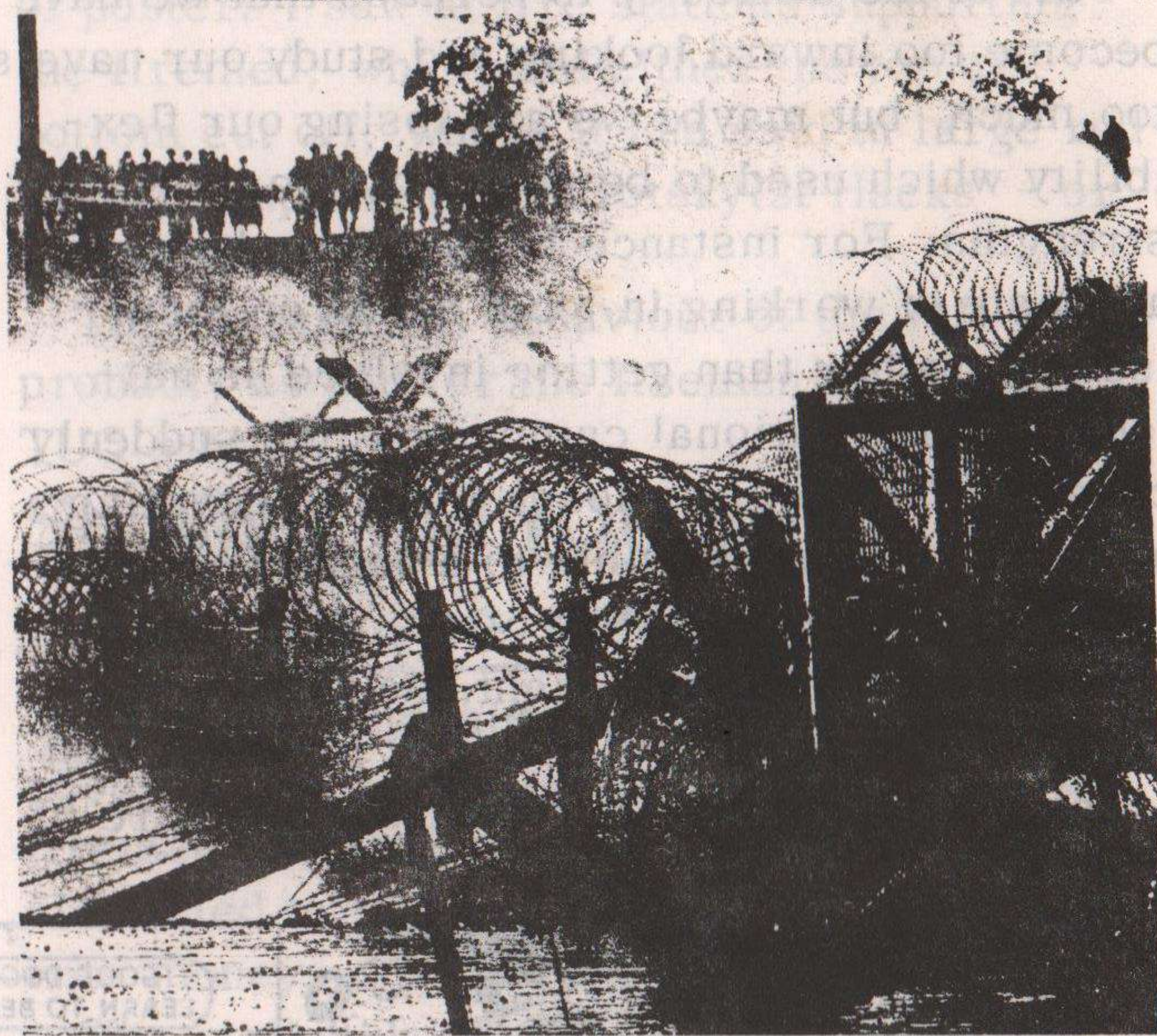
Nuclear waste remains a potential danger to the community for thousands of years and is at present being stored because no satisfactory way has been found of disposing of it and leaks may occur; Between 1970-6 there have been 99 recorded incidents at Windscale during which a high level of radioactivity was discharged over a restricted area. There is also the question as to whether the technology involved with the nuclear programme has been tested. British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. who wish to develop a new thermal oxide reprocessing plant at Windscale, admitted at the enquiry the need to use in part unproven technology. If you consider the potential danger, this is bloody disgusting.

## Do we need the stuff?

Do we actually need nuclear energy? Like a fucking hole in the head. Several people have arrived at different answers to the question of the future demand for energy, using different growth rates on which the need for nuclear energy rests. This is a great basis for a programme proposed by the Atomic Energy Authority of 104,000 M.W. of nuclear capac-

ity by the year 2000 ie a great number of reactors.

There are also far reaching political implications of the nuclear programme. State interference is bound to increase in the sense that initially new measures will be taken to protect the nuclear industry. A special Constabulary has already been created and consists at present of about 400 pigs. They carry arms and can



*Barbed-wire, trenches confront German demonstrators trying to occupy a site.*

pursue and hold anyone 'suspected' of theft of nuclear material; what great potential for the state to step up its violent intervention into our lives under the guise of the protection of society from (ironically) a nuclear catastrophe. People working in the industry will be subject to greater surveillance by the security forces and security checks on people living near to reactors; will increase as the nuclear programme develops and obviously all revolutionary groups will be watched. These more open police-state methods are inevitable and we will fight them with everything we've got. It is also likely that as the technology is sold abroad, the ability to make nuclear weapons will grow. West German Rulers sold a complete nuclear fuel cycle to Brazil in 1975, and France sold a reactor to S. Africa in May 1976. W. Ger. was prepared to deliver the type of technology described as 15% identical with the production of an A-bomb... to this Govt.





10's of thousands of French people kept from Nuclear site by armed police.

## No thanks!

Our opposition in Europe is massive and powerful, consisting of; the multi-nationals, the Govts. and their civil servants and scientists, the majority of political Parties and all those with interests in the nuclear industry, and this body has tried to build up the view that it is inevitable and harmless. The British Govt., concerned with its dependence on the Arab oil-States, the possibility of further energy crises and its policy of economic growth at any price, is totally committed to a massive nuclear programme. Because this is technologically possible and profitable, they pursue such a programme irrespective of whatever detrimental consequences, in order to keep the decaying capitalist system together. In furthering their aim, any dissention is unacceptable to them, and through the media the State has for a long time been 'preparing' all of us to accept its decision. We oppose their decision.

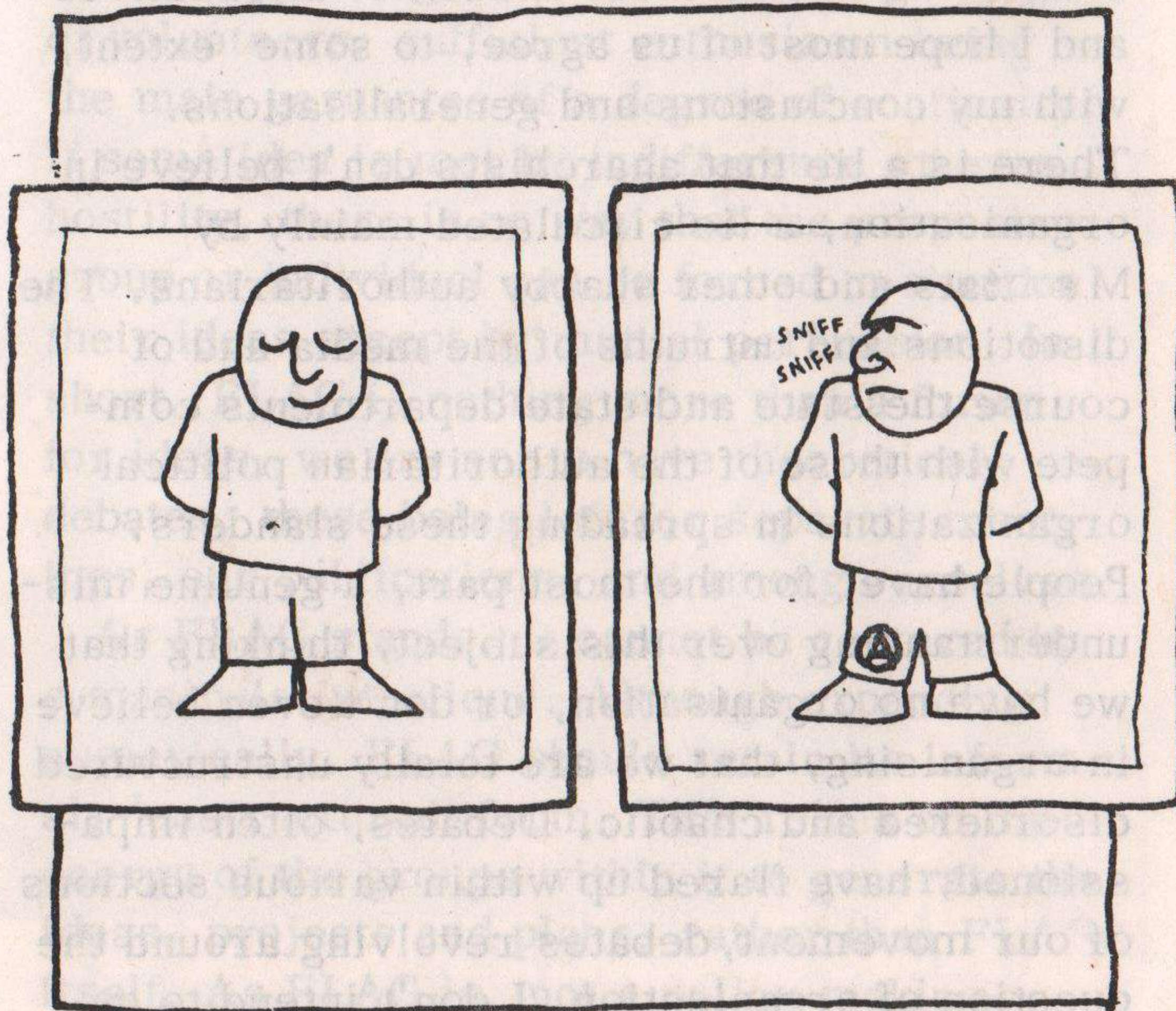
The question now to be asked is what tactics should we use to stop this death-programme? I have tried to show that the Govt. is intent on following a nuclear programme and so any reliance in, or working for the setting-up of, public enquiries which are instigated by the Govt. is totally useless. The Windscale enquiry was a waste of time and so will be the next which will allow for wider relevant

issues to be considered, about whether or not to proceed with a prototype fast-breeder reactor. Also it's fruitless having faith in any reformist groups like Friends of the Earth who rely on the Govt. changing its mind and who will back out of the struggle as soon as the fight gets violent, or having faith in the Communist Party controlled CND.

We must now organise and then undertake direct action such as: occupations of prospective sites and relevant Govt. buildings, mass demonstrations and more imaginative actions. Our State forces will have reviewed the actions of the French and German pigs at the mass anti-nuclear demos, and so they will be preparing for any confrontation. We must also learn from the European battles and act knowing the violence the State forces are prepared to use, and preparing to defend ourselves. We must encourage thousands of people, through agitation and knowledge, to stop this menace, and as the movement grows we should go on the offensive because the only way to halt this Programme and its disastrous consequences is to smash the State and then the rotting capitalist system it is part of and protects, will fall.

Trev.

NB. To satisfy those people who doubt the intentions of the Govt. and energy companies; the research and development of nuclear fission between 1977/8 is expected to cost £127m while research and development into alternative, safe energy resources for the same period is estimated at only £3m.





# ANARCHY IN THE U.K. — O.K.?

## Introduction

Is there an anarchist movement in this country? The answer to this must be a qualified 'Yes'. In relative terms, the anarchist movement, although in the classical organizational sense is fragmentary, and in numerical comparison to the authoritarian left only modestly represented, it is at present experiencing a progressive growth. This is reflected in several inter-related ways; for example the increasing number of publications such as papers, magazines, periodicals, pamphlets and books, dealing with, by and about, anarchists and anarchism. There is a mushrooming of anarchist groups and a substantial increase in the number of anarchists and people moving towards an anarchist perspective. Anarchist ideas are seeping into various movements that are not anarchist, such as the women's movement (1). These are just some of the more visible manifestations. Although there are still important vacuums waiting to be filled; although the process of expansion (in all its meanings) has tentatively got underway, the future outlook is more optimistic than it has been for a considerable period. Outlined below, are the trends I can distinguish organically developing within our movement, with some possible indications, hinting at subsequent events and tendencies. We, as anarchists, are going through the process of disseminating anarchist ideas and attempting to construct anarchist alternatives and I hope most of us agree, to some extent, with my conclusions and generalisations. There is a lie that anarchists don't believe in organisation, a lie circulated mainly by **Marxists** and other shabby authoritarians. The distortions and untruths of the media and of course the state and state departments compete with those of the authoritarian political organizations in spreading these slanders. People have, for the most part, a genuine misunderstanding over this subject, thinking that we have no organisation, or don't even believe in organising, that we are totally unstructured disordered and chaotic. Debates, often impassioned, have flared up within various sections of our movement, debates revolving around the question of organisation. I don't intend to go

into the mechanics of these particular arguments, rather I would prefer to tackle the question using the situation as it stands at the present time. I want to use the example of FLAG (Federation of London Anarchist Groups) because despite its present limitations, it's the organisation with which I'm more familiar, rather than, say, the other regional federations although I assume they conform to the same pattern. I also look on FLAG with a favourable eye, because as I see it, it's more suited to today's situation, than a more rigid and structured organisation.

## Organisation

Anarchist organisation is anti-authoritarian. We prefer a non-hierarchical, horizontal formation, functioning on a dynamic of constant examination, questioning, experimentation and education; in short existing on a mainly empiric basis. We still however, operate in an anarchist framework, anarchist theory is not relegated backstage, it is however not developed into an unbending ideology, incapable of innovation; it's a question of balance and accommodation and the occasional compromise. Breaking down of roles and a sharing of skills is another product of a more informal grouping. Within anarchist organisations, emphasis is placed on the autonomy of groups and the full development and emancipation of the individual, given of course, the limitations and the context of our actions in any situation. Ideas percolate, branching out in many directions, usually this doesn't happen at the expense of clarity, it prevents groups from becoming immobile and too entrenched. Whenever anarchism has developed into a mass movement, or indicated that it may grow into a significant or influential force, the dangers of bureaucracy, leadership in the manipulative and authoritarian sense have loomed up. Anarchists from the time of Bakunin onwards have been obsessed, correctly and with the utmost justification, with tackling and solving these problems. Arguments and controversy still accompany questions revolving around these crucial challenges, it's still an ongoing problem. The solutions, partial or otherwise, will only be arrived at by a continuous free flow of dialogue and ideas. Authoritarians of all

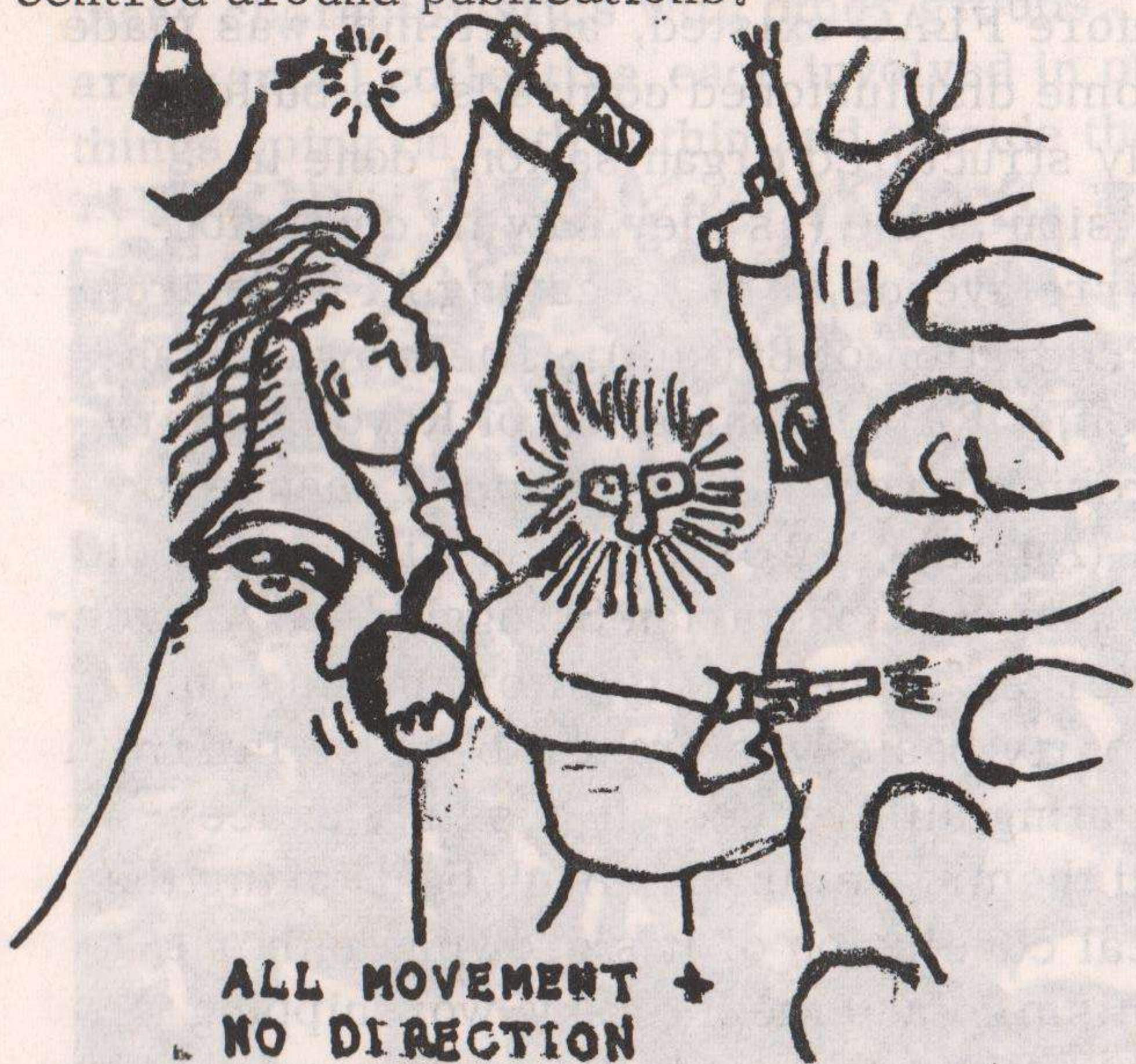


shades will be horrified by this mode of operation because it is difficult to control, regiment, to pound into 'shape', into the 'correct' 'historical' or 'dialectical-materialist' or even 'revolutionary party' line. For us, autonomy of groups, independence of thought and action are of paramount importance. Although we may believe in some form of structure, our formations are constructed in exceedingly unassuming terms, we prefer, indeed encourage, a horizontal organisation as opposed to the authoritarian pyramidal complex, so beloved by our rulers would-be or otherwise. For us, there is very little to choose between Mao's gibberings or Hitler's obscene rantings (2). So far I have dealt with organisation in abstract terms, I shall now tackle the question of anarchist organisation in a concrete manner.

## Groups

First of all, a brief glance at the composition of groups that constitute FLAG:

- 1) Local groups - this speaks for itself, a group operating on a geographical basis.
- 2) Groups involved in the production of anarchist papers and magazines. In London especially many of the groups (four) are centred around publications.



- 3) University groups - self explanatory groups based in universities and other places of 'education'.
- 4) 'Political' anarchist groups - or as they prefer, 'organised'. LCG (Libertarian Communist Group) and ACA (Anarchist Communist Association). LCG don't send delegates but are drifting toward the IMG - dominated 'Socialist Unity'. ACA do send

delegates, they form their groups on a local basis (more about these below).

- 5) Delegates from anarchist and libertarian groups centred around campaigns or involved in issues such as atomic energy or from, say, libertarian leaning bookshops, prisoners groups, international topics and of course the anarchist centres.
- 6) London Workers group - a group of working militants, who are meeting 'to establish and encourage communication and solidarity between workers in all industries'.
- 7) Delegates from the sex-pol groups - such as anarcho-feminist and gay groups.
- 8) Individuals, who usually form their own groups or join others (but not always).
- 9) Any other groups.

## F.L.A.G.

Basically, FLAG functions like this... groups send as many delegates as they wish, usually one or two. There is a great diversification in the composition of groups, never the less disruptions are minimal. (Generally) FLAG has no rules and regulations (3), no permanent secretaries, a chairperson and secretary being chosen at each gathering. These people volunteer spontaneously. All that happens is that group delegates attend the (approx. monthly) meetings, inform others present as to their activities, collect general news and inlist or give assistance to whatever is going on. No general decisions are made except where and when to have the next meeting. If a proposal or project is worth supporting, there is never a shortage of volunteers, sufficient enthusiasm being the main guarantee of a degree of continuity. If some idea is met by indifference or even hostility, there is no way that the proposing group or individual can be forced to abandon their ideas except by mutual persuasion. In short, FLAG is nothing more than a forum for ideas, we try not to have theoretical debates; these being left for separate meetings, our publications, and among ourselves.

As FLAG stands, it cannot be captured by a manipulative clique. Although expanding numerically, FLAG should retain its informal, 'unstructured' form. This relies on the energy of the groups within it to generate the ideas, projects and plans, rather than FLAG itself. As FLAG is not a policy making

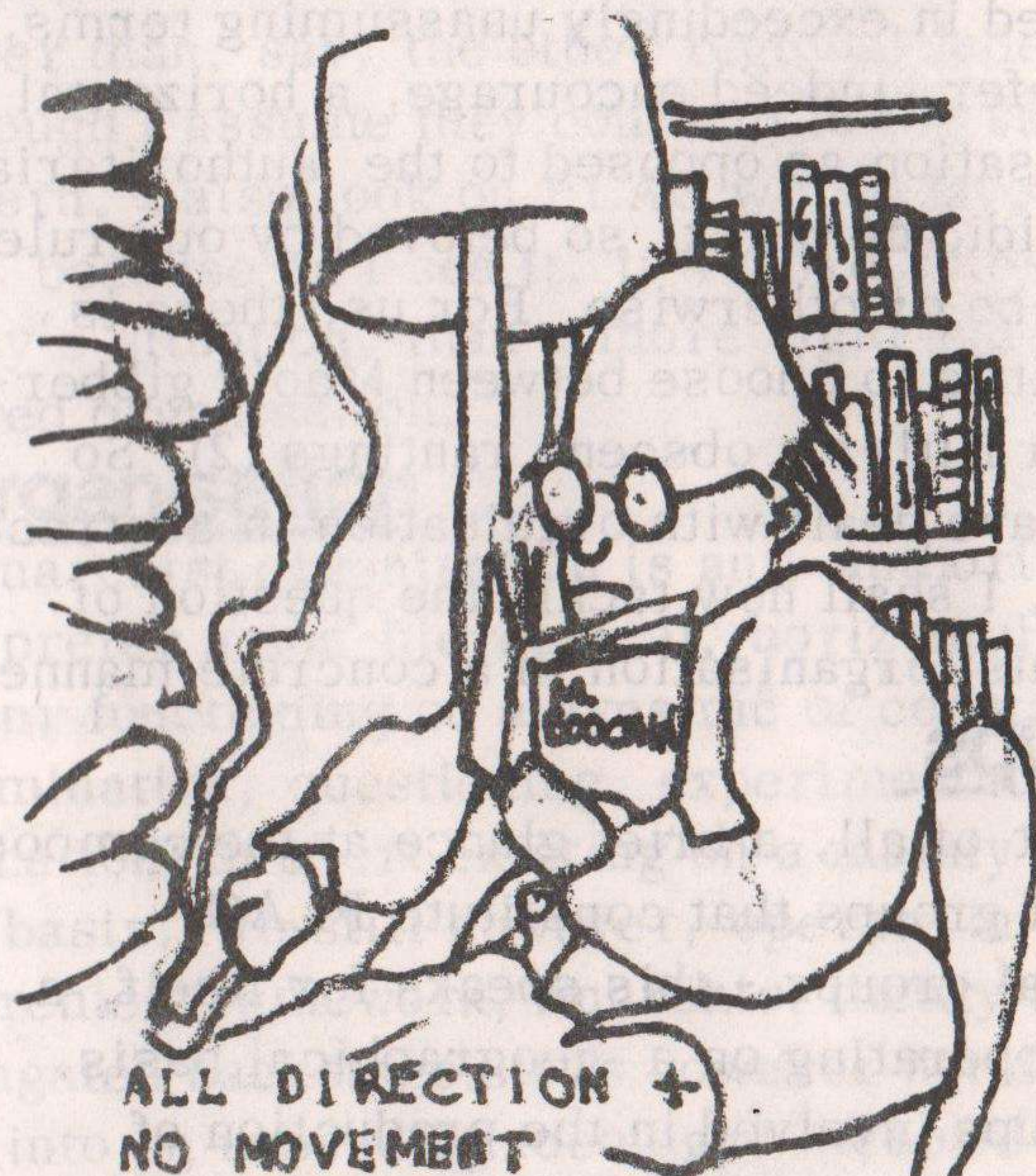


council, or anything like that, when it comes to sending delegates to other federations, it's better for groups to send their own representatives rather than 'FLAG' delegates. Unless the people at FLAG are unanimous concerning a matter, the aforementioned suggestion is preferable. Another reason for groups to send their own delegates, is because FLAG contains such diverse elements, and the danger of a group 'representing' FLAG when it represents only itself. It's usually a question of APPROACH and TACTICS that divide us, although in the main it is ideological differences that are the most important factors. Individual and personality clashes also play their part.

A product of FLAG is the 'feedback' and cross-fertilisation of ideas and information. Anarchist groups are strengthened by an organic process. It's all a process of encouragement, there's never too little to do, the result of our endeavours is a complex, but not baffling, flow of ideas. Activities cover an expansive range, impossible to describe within this limited space. We have never had to expel a group, or prevent an individual from attending. This situation may eventually arise. I think we have sufficient intelligence to deal with this or any similar predicament.

The reason FLAG hasn't splintered and fragmented, containing such differing elements is pretty straight forward. FLAG is a forum, a rendezvous of groupings, into which ideas are fed, leaving the groups to decide what to do. This system functions for us, whereas a central apparatus churning out directives, orders and instructions, is totally alien to us. The diverse elements in FLAG are able to fall back onto the activities of like-minded groups rather than becoming involved in factional polemics. This form of respectful unity in FLAG doesn't mean automatic collapse every time differing opinion arises, neither does it necessarily mean a negation of inter-group solidarity.

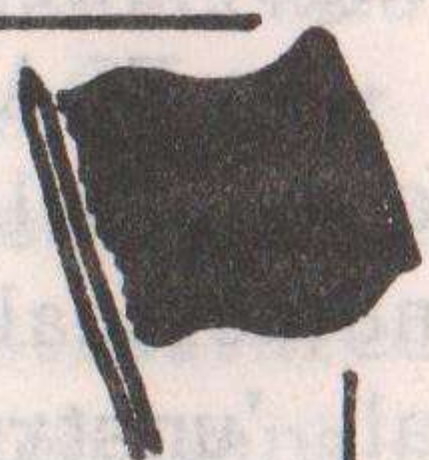
If FLAG did disintegrate, because most of us are interconnected as groups and individuals, the terrific amount of 'overlap' - most of us meet on an informal basis anyway, or in several groups - it would be a loss, but not a fatal one. Activities would still continue, we would still grow, and anyway, eventually we would probably reconstitute on a basis similar to FLAG.



### O.R.A. - A.W.A.

Before FLAG existed, an attempt was made by some disillusioned comrades, to build a highly structured organisation, done in revulsion at the (as they saw it) confusion and irrelevance of the decaying AFB (Anarchist Federation of Britain). Their own organisation, ORA (Organisation of Revolutionary Anarchists) went through a name change to AWA (Anarchist Workers Association) as did their paper 'Libertarian Struggle' to 'Anarchist Worker'. The futility of organising on a neo-party basis was proved, because far from mitigating differences, it possibly exacerbated them, one tiny AWA global taking the logical conclusion of its growing authoritarianism joined the Trotsky-worshipping Workers Revolutionary Party. For anarchists, building an organisation on fixed principles is a total time-waster, as AWA demonstrates. AWA, as it drifted into the arms of Trotskyism became more sectarian in its relation to the other anarchist groups. An inability to develop both theoretically and numerically, led eventually to a split, the Anarchists being thrown out (!) The AWA rump became the LCG

# ANARCHY



## IS THE BEST POLICY



IN BRIEF

moving into the 'Socialist Unity' electoral coalition, where they are one of the factions arguing for a more 'centralised framework'. (4) The remainder have formed the ACA, who support FLAG and are moving (or seem to be) in an anarchist direction, while their ex-comrades go the opposite way.

All this shows the impossibility of building a centralised anarchist group, bordering on a party, hoping that people will 'join'. Anarchist groups must grow organically, and as part of this process they will tend to consolidate themselves into larger groups and then federations. An artificial 'boost' only upsets growth as far as we're concerned. A 'mobilising' tendency must develop from within rather than from without. It's no good setting yourself up as a deliberate organisational clique as this breeds elitism, sectarianism, and only alienates other anarchists and groups.

## Anarchy

Anarchist groups are usually 'affinity groups' with the members being in close contact outside the group also. I would like to write about the ANARCHY collective as this is the group I know best. Although we cannot be regarded as 'typical', we share many characteristics with other groups. We are a small collective, each involved in other things going on both within and outside the

movement, i.e. at work, in the neighbourhood, printing, anti-fascism, nuclear power opposition, and 'outside' - with our kids, motorbikes, nasty-substances, and chatting to people while waiting hours at bus-stops. (Added by typist!) As a group we are attempting, along with Zero magazine, to refurbish a house in the East End in order to create a joint office (grateful thanks to the 2 ACA members, and one from the SWP for doing our rewiring!) We have close links with many anarchist groups and individuals, and some of us are in close touch with Left groups. We are all youngish (18-35) but several of us have been anarchists for a considerable period. We each have a different understanding of anarchism and this is reflected in our articles in the magazine. 10 people, 11 opinions! Where we are in agreement on an issue, we usually disagree on tactics or emphasis. We would welcome more feedback-if you think the stuff in ANARCHY is garbage (or inspiring), say so. If you fancy writing an article or letter, who can stop you! We would be able to receive more feedback if more people street-sold Anarchy, and we could find our way into more bookshops and newsagents. We're trying to get it out quarterly (feb, may, aug, nov). We think that every anarchist paper should publish a list of contacts so that isolated sympathisers can reach other anarchists.



'Ere, officer... there's farsands of anniekists and other riff-raff taking over the streets'  
(ANTI-FASCISTS - LEWISHAM)



## The Future

I would like to make a few observations in summing up. In the wake of the amazing events at Lewisham and Ladywood, with the near certainty of repetition - possibly at Ilford during the May council elections, we must prepare ourselves to take full advantage of these situations, in every context: 'political' and physical. These are the training grounds for the stormy future. As we become more successful we can expect more hostility from certain sections of the authoritarian Left. We should be ready to repel these attacks, being more than just physically prepared. Some of us are nearly ready. The remainder of the 70's should see anti-nuclear feeling grow - in a Malville/Greys/Brokdorf sense, not a Windscale enquiry. Again we should be preparing - unprecedented conflict is around the corner.

Lefties may sneer at our size and forms of organisation, asking what chance we stand against the forces of the State, but just look at the miserable performance of the Left and the mighty Unions at Grunwicks. At 1 point, 15,000 workers completely surrounded the Grunwick plant, cutting off the buses of scabs, defeating the police attempts to clear the area, and what happened? They allowed themselves to be led away by Scargill and Co., just like sheep. From the jaws of victory.... If a tinpot boss like Ward, a few snotty Tory MP's, the creeps from the NAFF plus a couple of thousand uniformed thugs, can beat the whole 'trade-union movement' and the pathetic 'revolutionary-Left', it's time we took ourselves a bit more seriously. We must begin to build up a presence on the streets (as elsewhere). I would like to suggest that we start by mass paper sales, branching out from there.

We should read as much as possible, of our own, and the 'enemies' literature, in order to expand our understanding and our capability to grapple with the chicanery and machiavellianism of the authoritarians. We won't become contaminated by exploration and study. We should have closer contacts with libertarian-leaning or 'ultra-left' groups like Solidarity and Social Revolution. Also likewise individuals. We need to conduct more extensive propaganda on every level, and have more, much more, discussion amongst ourselves. We must not be frightened by the prospect of confrontation, neither should we allow ourselves

to be led into ambushes or situations beyond our control. We have to iron out the contradictions that arise during the growth process, this is an ongoing thing. We shall never become a cohesive whole, but should we? I don't think so. Let's have some more definitions, of authority, hierarchy and government. Let us be aware that we are capable of breeding elitism, hierarchy, authoritarianism, just as much as everyone else, then perhaps we can deal with it. I would like to see us become less of a colourful appendage of the left, more independent. Anarchist groups whither away as well as shoot up, but lately there has been more consolidation of local groups. We've seen more positive signs as of late. We are still sowing dragon's teeth, but wait! What's this? Some are hatching already?

'M' Bang on the start of '78

### Footnotes.

(1) See 'Socialism, Anarchism and Feminism' by Carol Ehrlich. 'Anarchism: the Feminist Connection' by Peggy Kornegger. and 'Anarcho-Feminism, Two Statements' in Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review no. 3

(2) A perfect example of the authoritarian mode of thinking is offered in Mao's Red Book, the section on 'discipline'. "We must affirm anew the discipline of the party namely: 1. The individual is subordinate to the organisation. 2. The minority is subordinate to the majority. 3. The lower level is subordinate to the higher level. 4. The entire membership is subordinate to the central committee. Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts party unity."

Only one thing is missing: "The central committee is subordinate to me".

(3) No rules, except that the newsletter is only mailed to affiliated groups.

(4) See The Islington Gutter Press no. 42 page 15.

Comment - "I like it - after it was translated into English"

